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Atari Online News, Etc.
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~ EA Does Dante's Inferno ~ Illegal Uploader Fined ~ Male Life A Game?

-* Digital "Fort Knox" Hacked! *-
-* Microsoft Tackles 17-Year-Old Bug! *-
-* Chinese Hacker Training Business Shut Down *-

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->From the Editor's Keyboard
"*****"

"Saying it like it is!"

"Snowmageddon"??!! C'mon, Mr. President, don't be so dramatic! You folks had a couple of bad snow blizzards! Big Deal. Aren't you the presidential candidate who ran under the "We Need Change" banner? Well, you got it, in the form of a very snowy winter in the D.C. area. Maybe the folks down there should invest heavily in some more snow removal equipment to prevent the area from "shutting down" for awhile! Did I hear the newscaster correctly the other night when he stated that it was costing \$100 million a day due to the government not being able to conduct business? Great, there's a ton of money being blown for no good reason! Sorry, but our national government should not come to a standstill because of excessive snow, and then joke about it while coining a stupid term.

But yes, the mid-Atlantic states have seen a couple of massive snow storms over the past couple of weeks - that is, if you haven't seen the reports on the local news (and especially if you have!). I have to chuckle, because up here in New England we were spared those storms - the first because of the cold, and the second because of the warmth (warm winds off of the ocean). And trust me, we're not complaining up here. Hey, want some fun? Truck up some of that white stuff and deliver it to Vancouver - they could use some snow!

Speaking of Vancouver, the 2010 Winter Olympics starts tonight. I like the winter Olympics for a number of reasons. There are a lot of exciting events; and I hope to be able to catch a few of them. Go Team USA!

So, in-between watching the opening ceremonies and some early events, we hope you take some time to check out this week's issue!

Until next time...

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PEOPLE ARE TALKING
compiled by Joe Mirando
joe@atarinews.org

Hidi ho friends and neighbors. Another week has come and gone, and I think

maybe we'll actually be able to take a look at some UseNet messages! Will wonders never cease?

But before we do, I just want to mention one thing that's really been ticking me off for a while. It's the use (or, mis-use, actually) of the English language. People making up words instead of actively trying to find existing words to do the job and assuming the rest of the population is as limited as they are and that they'll just go along with it like they knew what this new made up thing was all along.

It really irritates me.

Like the current "Snowmageddon". Yeah, we all know what it means, but is it really necessary to give the situation a new name? That's just annoying. And yeah, its unusual for the Washington DC area to get that much snow, but let's face it; it's hardly the end of the world.

I had a supervisor once who used to "documentate" procedures and "quantifize" the "rezits". Yeah, slightly humorous, but incredibly annoying when you've actually take the time to LEARN the language. C'mon folks, there are tens of thousands of words in the English language. Do we really NEED to make up more out of thin air?

Doing this just leads to scattered thought and the inability to put ones thoughts into clear, concise terms. No wonder we had a president that was misunderestimated.

A derivative of this is using words with meanings that really don't fit what you're trying to say. I started noticing this more and more about 5 years ago. I remember when the Red Sox won the pennant. All of a sudden, there was a "Red Sox nation". Really? Would someone please explain to me how this accurately describes ANYTHING?

And if that wasn't bad enough, now other people are using it. I heard it the other night on one of those tabloid TV shows as I was clicking through the channels... It was a poll taken in the "A H nation" (the show was Access Hollywood). Come on, do you mean to tell me that no one at the network could have come up with a better, more descriptive word or phrase to impart a feeling of camaraderie among people who have nothing more in common than that they watch the same mindless gossip show for thirty minutes a night? No wonder I can't find a job!

Well, if you can't beat 'em, join 'em, right? Well from now on, I guess I'll have dual citizenship. Starting now, I'll be a part of both the Conster Nation and the Indig Nation. One place I'm NOT ready for yet though is the Resig Nation. [chuckle]

Well, that's enough for this week. Let's take a look at what's going on online. I HOPE we finally have enough stuff from the UseNet to keep our interest for a few minutes.

From the comp.sys.atari.st NewsGroup
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'Phantom' asks:

"What CD programs are/were available for making Audio/Data CDs on ST-Falcon?

I know of a couple that I use, but seems I recall a few others that were made. If there are any that work, would like info on them and which CD burners are supported?"

Ronald Hall tells Phantom that he's...

"Not sure, but think I posted this before, but in case you missed it, ExtenDOS Pro and the CDWriter Suite from Roger Burrows at Anodyne Software is pretty awesome. It works fine on my Yamaha burner on my Mega ST for backing up my BBS stuff to CD. Its also great on my Liteon DVD burner on my Falcon - yes, you can burn DVDs on your Falcon. Does audio CD's on both as well. There is a list of supported [sic]software on the website.

<http://www.anodynesoftware.com/>

It is commercial though. Or were you talking about free software?

Of course, I meant a list of supported "hardware"... :)"

Phantom replies:

"I have that software, bought it new, haven't upgraded to the latest version though.

Was wondering if there was anything else available besides ExtenDos/CD Writer?"

Ronald tells Phantom:

"[ExtenDOS is] Awesome software, and Roger is great.

> Was wondering if there was anything else available besides ExtenDos/CD
> Writer?

[Maybe] Spin? Not sure about it really does though..

Maybe someone with experience with it can jump in here?"

Uwe Seimet, author of HD Driver, tells Ronald:

"No, Spin is just for reading, not for writing."

Edward Baiz adds:

"This is a no brainer. Get the programs from Anodyne Software. They are the best and work great."

Phantom tells Edward:

"I have those, just maybe not the latest version.

I do have a different Atari CD Burner Software/hardware system that works great!"

Now we go from CD writing to music writing as Phantom asks:

"Anyone still using an Atari based stuff for Music stuff these days?

Web sites, links please if you know of any... of just let me know what if anything is going on...

Also, any real Atari users from the old days still going?

I know most of us have modified our own equipment, just curious if there is still a demand for Atari based software, hardware, music and the like?

I never left but it seems that everyone else did."

Again, Ronald replies to Phantom.

"Phantommm, check here:

<http://www.atari-forum.com/viewtopic.php?f=28&t=18392&p=158533&hilit=...>

Real Atari users?? Me, me, me! Oh, but I guess you know about me... :)

> I know most of us have modified our own equipment, just curious if there
> is still a demand for Atari based software, hardware, music and the
> like?

Demand for Atari based software? I'm pretty sure that most of us that frequent the newsgroups and website forums would respond with a resounding yes.

Nah [we haven't left], we're just hibernating through this cold winter..."

Guillaume Tello adds:

" I'm still using some Ataris:
- two TT for programming
- two STE's for games.

You can see them on my page:

http://pagesperso-orange.fr/gtello/machin_e.htm "

Dennis Schulmeister adds:

"Sorry, no website but me, too. Though I'm not frequently writing to the list I'm constantly reading it and do post sometimes at atari-home.de

Actually I'm using Cubase on Falcon for several years now and got it synced to several audio workstations in the meantime. Back in the days I used to use a Windows DAW called n-track. Later came Ardour on Linux and now I have it hooked up with a AW4416 which is a digital mixer with built-in audio recorder. MTC/MMC works wonders and it's great to have Cubase play the synthesizers in sync to the audio recordings.

If I remember correctly, I started with ATARI sometime around 1992 and am

still using it. So I would consider myself to be from the old days."

Edward Baiz jumps in and adds:

"I have been around since the beginning and am still using an Atari (much to the displeasure of my wife). Right now I am just using a small Falcon030, but am waiting for the CTPCI upgrade before I start putting together an upgraded Falcon system. I am also getting the Coldfire computer. As far as Midi is concerned, I do not do too much. I probably when my new systems are up and running. I do have an old Roland MT-32 MIDI module which still works great. I have Cub, Cub lite and Sweet-16 (which is still supported I think)."

Phantom replies:

"I've heard of the ColdFire Project, I wouldn't mind getting one, but need to find out more about it first. I'm glad that projects like this are still going on. I just don't want to spend my hard earned money on another board, only to find out, that 6 months later, I'll have to buy another one to have the bug free one. Where can I place an order for one?"

Jo Even Skarstein supplies the URL:

"<http://acp.atari.org/> "

Piotrek asks about using a Compact Flash card:

"I have question with configuration of Hard Disk and Compact Flash card using HDDriver on Atari falcon. My friend have very old Hard disk Quantum GLS127A (2.5 inch). Information about this disk I found on web page

<http://stason.org/TULARC/pc/hard-drives-hdd/quantum/GODRIVE-GLS-127-A...>

But still I have a problem is it possibility to change between master and slave.

When I connect this drive and Compact Flash Card (Kingstom 4 GB) (connect to IDE port via special converter using 2,5 inch cable, the HDDriver showed only the disk, but I connected only the Card HDDriver showed when boot the system.

ELITE PRO CF CARD 4 GB ver 2 Direct Access

The problem is because I have not possibility to save it, HDDriver Install in Hddrutil.app is not active.

Does somebody know what can I do with this? Maybe with other disk drive?"

PPera tells Piotrek:

"Not exactly clear what you try to say..."

Usually on CF card adapters is jumper for selecting will it be master or slave. But you need to try that Kingston first alone, as master. It

will likely work not good with Falcon - according to my experiences. Especially writing (save) is troublesome. Maybe it is the reason why you can not do proper install. [A] Much better choice is some Sandisk CF card.

In any case, you need first to partition card, update config and only then you may install driver. What Hddriver vers. you have?"

Jim DeClercq adds:

"This from a TT030 running a generic CF card as a hard drive. This part works. I would suggest trying the 2.5 inch drive separately, first. If there is some other problem with the 2.5 inch drive, try ICD Pro Tools, which does not, I am told, use the complete command set, and may work. It is compatible with the much better HDDriver.

When you have that working (there should be jumpers on the drive, to be done at the other end of its cable) then, by my experience, using a SCSI bridge card and a CF card adapter, any brand should work. But you need to partition it, before any driver will install."

Well folks, that's it for this time around. Tune in again next week, same time, same station, and be ready to listen to what they are saying when...

PEOPLE ARE TALKING

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->In This Week's Gaming Section      - EA Does 'Dante's Inferno' Justice!
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                                         Life Is A Game?
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->A-ONE's Game Console Industry News - The Latest Gaming News!

EA Does 'Dante's Inferno' Justice

If ever there was a work of great literature tailor-made for adaptation into a video game, it would be Dante Alighieri's "Inferno" from "The Divine Comedy," a three-part poem. It has hell's signature foreboding and a litany of monstrous entities that any game developer needs for a good head start.

Electronic Arts has treated Dante's vision of nine circles of hell with

the care and respect it deserves in "Dante's Inferno" (\$60; Xbox 360, PS3, PSP). It's a frightening journey to the underworld that earns every ounce of its "M" for mature rating.

You play, of course, as Dante, who is in a Middle Ages midlife crisis. He must find his lost love Beatrice and rescue her from Lucifer and his minions while evading and doling out punishment (or absolution) to thousands of lost souls along the descent through hell. He also does some navel-gazing about some of his own decisions that have landed him in this fine predicament.

This third-person action game has a good feel to it, and reminds me in movements and level adversity to THQ's excellent "Conan" title of 2007. Slashing combat attacks and deft blocking are crucial to vanquishing the enemies with Dante's primary weapon, Death's scythe.

I played the Xbox 360 version. In an early level, after killing innumerable souls who thrust at me with crude weapons, I faced off against an evil boss who rode atop a beast, steering him by his horns. Fortunately I had acquired some slick fighting moves after cashing in a few collected souls, which serve as the currency of choice in hell. You beat up and kill some souls, then use them to buy better skills.

All along the journey there was wailing, crying and screaming. It echoed from beyond the walls, as souls seeking salvation begged for my help. Occasionally, I came upon famous characters in history and was given the honor of granting absolution or punishment.

For instance, I chose to push the "X" button and punish Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor who, according to the Gospels, allowed Jesus of Nazareth to be crucified. As he begged forgiveness, my scythe drove violently through his skull and his body fell before me. Likewise, I also punished Clodia, a notorious gambler and seducer of ancient Rome.

I chose, however, to absolve the Greek poet Orpheus, who glowed white and rose to the heavens. Then I had to grab his sins by pressing the X-Y-A-B controller buttons as orbs containing his sins floated toward the corresponding colors in the center of the screen. I grabbed enough to grant him absolution and earn some bonus souls.

Such were the decisions I made as I fought my way through the circles of Limbo, Lust and Gluttony.

"Dante's Inferno" isn't a title for the squeamish. After crossing the River of Acheron, I faced off against bloody toddlers with blades for arms. They hobbled around and slashed at me, and later reappeared when the female level boss plucked them from her bosom and sent them to attack me again. These "unblessed infants" are explained to be children facing damnation for not having been baptized.

The finishing moves are polished and exciting, the weapons and powers are fun to use. The lovely Beatrice, however, can barely keep her clothes on in any of the lively cut scenes. If Dante ever finds and rescues her, hopefully he'll have saved up enough Judas coins along the way to buy her something warm.

Beatrice looks cold, though comely, even in hell.

Four out of four stars.

Gamer To Pay Nintendo \$1.3 Million for Illegal Upload

An Australian man has agreed to pay Nintendo 1.3 million US dollars for illegally uploading a game to the Internet six days before its global release, the firm said Tuesday.

Nintendo said it had settled the Federal Court action against the man who hacked into New Super Mario Bros. for the Wii gaming console and put it on the world wide web on November 6, 2009.

"The legal proceeding resulted in a settlement in which the individual will pay to Nintendo the sum of 1.5 million (Australian) dollars by way of damages to compensate Nintendo for the loss of sales revenue caused by the individual's actions," it said in a statement.

Nintendo said the Australian man, named by local media as 24-year-old James Burt, bought the popular game ahead of its global release when a shop accidentally put it on its shelves before the official sale date.

He breached copyright law by hacking into it and illegally making it available on the Internet, causing the company to lose thousands of sales, Nintendo said.

Games are generally made available in Australia around six months after their release in the major markets of Japan and the United States, but in this instance Australia was ahead of the rest of the world.

"It wasn't just an Australian issue, it was a global issue. There was thousands and thousands of downloads, at a major cost to us and the industry really," Nintendo Australia managing director Rose Lappin said.

"Once it's on the Internet it's anyone's really."

Nintendo said when it discovered the game was online, it used computer forensics experts to identify the individual responsible.

"Nintendo will pursue those who attempt to jeopardise our industry by using all means available to it under the law," the company said in the statement.

In the settlement on January 27, Burt was also ordered by the Federal Court to pay Nintendo's legal fees of 100,000 dollars.

Make Life A Game and Save The World

Game designer Jane McGonigal is adamant that epic wins can save the world.

Epic wins are videogame moments when players unflinchingly take on horrendous enemies for a greater good, and usually a mountain of experience points that let them "level-up" characters with improved abilities.

"A goal for the next decade is to make it as easy to save the world in real life as it is to save the world in online games," McGonigal told a

rapt audience at a prestigious TED Conference that ends here Saturday.

Approximately three billion hours are devoted weekly to playing videogames online.

The veteran game designer argued that the amount of play time must be bumped up to 21 billion hours weekly to solve global ills such as hunger, poverty, and climate change.

"I'm serious," McGonigal said in a playful presentation. "In the game world we become the best version of ourselves. We feel we are not as good in reality as we are in games."

If life better reflected games, people would be quickly entrusted with world-saving missions compatible with their talents and there would be "tons of collaborators" ready to help along the way.

And, there would be plenty of positive feedback - levelling up - to keep people inspired.

That is the way it is in "World of Warcraft," the leading online role-playing game where players have already spent the equivalent of 5.93 million years solving problems and vanquishing evil in that virtual realm.

If life were crafted more like a game, that passion and persistence could be unleashed on real problems, according to McGonigal.

Studies cited indicated that it is not unusual for game-loving US youths to each log 10,000 hours playing online by the time they reach the age of 21. That equates to the amount of time spent in public school.

"We have a parallel track of education," McGonigal said. "We are teaching urgent optimism' the desire to act immediately to tackle any obstacle with the belief in success - gamers always think they can win."

McGonigal and the World Bank Institute in March will launch an online Evoke game at urgentevoke.com that challenges players to complete 10 quests in as many weeks, with the missions tied to ills facing the planet.

Winners will get to claim World Bank social innovator titles and top players will earn scholarships and mentor programs.

"Gamers are super-empowered, hopeful individuals," McGonigal said. "We are using games today to escape real world suffering, everything that is broken in the real environment, but it doesn't have to end there."

Her prior game creations include "World Without Oil" which challenges players to thrive in that scenario, and "Superstruct" that calls on players to re-shape society to survive threats to life on the planet.

"We have to start making the real world more like a game," McGonigal said. "We want to imagine epic wins and give people the means to create epic wins."

A-ONE's Headline News
The Latest in Computer Technology News
Compiled by: Dana P. Jacobson

Chinese Police Shut Down Hacker Training Business

Police in central China have shut down a hacker training operation that openly recruited thousands of members online and provided them with cyberattack lessons and malicious software, state media said Monday.

The crackdown comes amid growing concern that China is a center for Internet crime and industrial espionage. Search giant Google said last month its e-mail accounts were hacked from China in an assault that also hit at least 20 other companies.

Police in Hubei province arrested three people suspected of running the hacker site known as the Black Hawk Safety Net that disseminated Web site hacking techniques and Trojan software, the China Daily newspaper said. Trojans, which can allow outside access to a computer when implanted, are used by hackers to illegally control computers. The report did not say exactly when the arrests took place.

Black Hawk Safety Net recruited more than 12,000 paying subscribers and collected more than 7 million yuan (\$1 million) in membership fees, while another 170,000 people had signed up for free membership, the paper said.

The report said police seized nine servers, five computers and a car, and shut down all Web sites involved in the case. Authorities also froze 1.7 million yuan (\$250,000) in assets.

The shutdown of the site followed an investigation involving 50 police officers in three other provinces, the local d iang Times newspaper said.

The case can be traced to a hacking attack in 2007 on an Internet cafe in Macheng city in Hubei that caused Web services for dozens to be disrupted for more than 60 hours, the paper said. A few of the suspects caught in April said they were members of the Black Hawk Safety Net.

Black Hawk's Web site 3800hk.com could not be accessed, but a notice purportedly from Black Hawk circulating on online forums said that a backup site had been set up. The notice also sought to reassure members of its continued operations and said its reputation was being smeared by some Internet users.

"At this time, there are Internet users with evil intentions who have deliberately destroyed Black Hawk's reputation, deceived our members and stole material," the notice addressed to members said. "We must join forces and attack these Web sites."

A customer service officer contacted by phone, who refused to give his name, said the backup site provides content for its paying members to download course material to allow them to continue their computer lessons - though not in hacking.

The Hubei government refused to comment Monday while officials at the

provincial public security bureau did not respond to repeated requests for comment.

Google threatened last month to pull out of China unless the government relented on censorship, an ultimatum that came after the search giant said it had uncovered a computer attack that tried to plunder its software coding and the e-mail accounts of human rights activists protesting Chinese policies.

Government officials have defended China's online censorship and denied involvement in Internet attacks, saying the country is the biggest victim of Web attacks. The Ministry of Industry and Information Technology said hackers tampered with more than 42,000 Web sites last year.

Meanwhile, scrutiny of Chinese Internet security grows following a rash of attacks traced to China and aimed at a wide array of U.S. and European targets, including military contractors, banks and technology companies.

Security consultants say it is hard to know what proportion of hacking from China is the work of individuals and whether the government is involved. But some say the high skill level of some attacks suggests China's military or other agencies might have trained or directed the hackers.

"The scale, operation and logistics of conducting these attacks - against the government, commercial and private sectors - indicates that they're state-sponsored," security firm Mandiant Corp. said in a report last month. "The Chinese government may authorize this activity, but there's no way to determine the extent of its involvement."

Microsoft Tackles 17-Year-Old Bug

A 17-year-old bug in Windows will be patched by Microsoft in its latest security update.

The February update for Windows will close the loophole that dates from the time of the DOS operating system.

First appearing in Windows NT 3.1, the vulnerability has been carried over into almost every version of Windows that has appeared since.

The monthly security update will also tackle a further 25 holes in Windows, five of which are rated as "critical".

The ancient bug was discovered by Google security researcher Tavis Ormandy in January 2010 and involves a utility that allows newer versions of Windows to run very old programs.

Mr Ormandy has found a way to exploit this utility in Windows XP, Windows Server 2003 and 2008 as well as Windows Vista and Windows 7.

The patch for this vulnerability will appear in the February security update. Five of the vulnerabilities being patched at the same time allow attackers to effectively hijack a Windows PC and run their own programs on it.

- * Use security software that can tackle viruses and spyware
- * Use a firewall
- * Apply operating system updates as soon as they become available
- * Be suspicious of unsolicited e-mails bearing attachments
- * Keep your browser up to date

As well as fixing holes in many versions of Windows, the update also tackles bugs in Office XP, Office 2003 and Office 2004 for Apple Macintosh machines.

The bumper update is not the largest that Microsoft has ever released. The security update for October 2009 tackled a total of 34 vulnerabilities. Eight of those updates were rated as critical - the highest level.

In January 2010, Microsoft released an "out of band" patch for a serious vulnerability in Internet Explorer that was being exploited online. The vulnerability was also thought to be the one used to attack Google in China.

Following the attack on Google, many other cyber criminals started seeking ways to exploit the loophole.

Also this week, a security researcher has reported the discovery of a vulnerability in Internet Explorer that allows attackers to view the files held on a victim's machine.

Microsoft has issued a security bulletin about the problem and aims to tackle it at a future date. At the moment there is no evidence that this latest find is being actively exploited online.

Security Chip That Does Encryption in PCs Hacked

Deep inside millions of computers is a digital Fort Knox, a special chip with the locks to highly guarded secrets, including classified government reports and confidential business plans. Now a former U.S. Army computer-security specialist has devised a way to break those locks.

The attack can force heavily secured computers to spill documents that likely were presumed to be safe. This discovery shows one way that spies and other richly financed attackers can acquire military and trade secrets, and comes as worries about state-sponsored computer espionage intensify, underscored by recent hacking attacks on Google Inc.

The new attack discovered by Christopher Tarnovsky is difficult to pull off, partly because it requires physical access to a computer. But laptops and smart phones get lost and stolen all the time. And the data that the most dangerous computer criminals would seek likely would be worth the expense of an elaborate espionage operation.

Jeff Moss, founder of the Black Hat security conference and a member of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's advisory council, called Tarnovsky's finding "amazing."

"It's sort of doing the impossible," Moss said. "This is a lock on Pandora's box. And now that he's pried open the lock, it's like, ooh, where

does it lead you?"

Tarnovsky figured out a way to break chips that carry a "Trusted Platform Module," or TPM, designation by essentially spying on them like a phone conversation. Such chips are billed as the industry's most secure and are estimated to be in as many as 100 million personal computers and servers, according to market research firm IDC.

When activated, the chips provide an additional layer of security by encrypting, or scrambling, data to prevent outsiders from viewing information on the machines. An extra password or identification such as a fingerprint is needed when the machine is turned on.

Many computers sold to businesses and consumers have such chips, though users might not turn them on. Users are typically given the choice to turn on a TPM chip when they first use a computer with it. If they ignore the offer, it's easy to forget the feature exists. However, computers needing the most security typically have TPM chips activated.

"You've trusted this chip to hold your secrets, but your secrets aren't that safe," said Tarnovsky, 38, who runs the Flylogic security consultancy in Vista, Calif., and demonstrated his hack last week at the Black Hat security conference in Arlington, Va.

The chip Tarnovsky hacked is a flagship model from Infineon Technologies AG, the top maker of TPM chips. And Tarnovsky says the technique would work on the entire family of Infineon chips based on the same design. That includes non-TPM chips used in satellite TV equipment, Microsoft Corp.'s Xbox 360 game console and smart phones.

That means his attack could be used to pirate satellite TV signals or make Xbox peripherals, such as handheld controllers, without paying Microsoft a licensing fee, Tarnovsky said. Microsoft confirmed its Xbox 360 uses Infineon chips, but would only say that "unauthorized accessories that circumvent security protocols are not certified to meet our safety and compliance standards."

The technique can also be used to tap text messages and e-mail belonging to the user of a lost or stolen phone. Tarnovsky said he can't be sure, however, whether his attack would work on TPM chips made by companies other than Infineon.

Infineon said it knew this type of attack was possible when it was testing its chips. But the company said independent tests determined that the hack would require such a high skill level that there was a limited chance of it affecting many users.

"The risk is manageable, and you are just attacking one computer," said Joerg Borchert, vice president of Infineon's chip card and security division. "Yes, this can be very valuable. It depends on the information that is stored. But that's not our task to manage. This gives a certain strength, and it's better than an unprotected computer without encryption."

The Trusted Computing Group, which sets standards on TPM chips, called the attack "exceedingly difficult to replicate in a real-world environment." It added that the group has "never claimed that a physical attack - given enough time, specialized equipment, know-how and money - was impossible. No form of security can ever be held to that standard."

It stood by TPM chips as the most cost-effective way to secure a PC.

It's possible for computer users to scramble data in other ways, beyond what the TPM chip does. Tarnovsky's attack would do nothing to unlock those methods. But many computer owners don't bother, figuring the TPM security already protects them.

Tarnovsky needed six months to figure out his attack, which requires skill in modifying the tiny parts of the chip without destroying it.

Using off-the-shelf chemicals, Tarnovsky soaked chips in acid to dissolve their hard outer shells. Then he applied rust remover to help take off layers of mesh wiring, to expose the chips' cores. From there, he had to find the right communication channels to tap into using a very small needle.

The needle allowed him to set up a wiretap and eavesdrop on all the programming instructions as they are sent back and forth between the chip and the computer's memory. Those instructions hold the secrets to the computer's encryption, and he didn't find them encrypted because he was physically inside the chip.

Even once he had done all that, he said he still had to crack the "huge problem" of figuring out how to avoid traps programmed into the chip's software as an extra layer of defense.

"This chip is mean, man - it's like a ticking time bomb if you don't do something right," Tarnovsky said.

Joe Grand, a hardware hacker and president of product- and security-research firm Grand Idea Studio Inc., saw Tarnovsky's presentation and said it represented a huge advancement that chip companies should take seriously, because it shows that presumptions about security ought to be reconsidered.

"His work is the next generation of hardware hacking," Grand said.

Google To Build Ultra-Fast Broadband Networks

Google plans to build experimental, ultra-fast Internet networks in a handful of communities around the country.

The search company said Wednesday that its fiber-optic broadband networks will deliver speeds of 1 gigabit per second to as many as 500,000 Americans. Google Inc. says those systems will be more than 100 times faster than the networks that most Americans have access to today.

In a blog post, the company said the networks will let consumers download a high-definition, full-length feature film in less than five minutes and allow rural health clinics to send 3-D medical images over the Web.

Google says it will seek input from communities that might be interested in getting one of the testbed networks.

The long war between Microsoft and Macintosh is almost over. It will end when Microsoft ships Office for Mac 2011, the release that ends Redmond's decade-long attack on Apple computers in business.

Office 2011, due before the holidays, replaces the much-despised Entourage e-mail client and information manager with a real version of Microsoft Outlook created for Macintosh.

When that happens, Mac users become full participants on their companies' Exchange-based e-mail systems. End of the Mac as a second-class corporate citizen.

Microsoft could have done this previously, but used Entourage to create a barrier between Mac users and Exchange. Given the issue persisted for a decade, the incompatibility must be considered intentional.

This nonsense went on much too long and Microsoft still deserves roasting for having pulled such a stunt in the first place. So, no congratulations from me.

Entourage appeared in 2000, replacing the previous Outlook Express that shipped with Office 98. Asked why they didn't just offer a new Mac version of Outlook, Microsoft replied that Entourage was intended for a different audience than Outlook served.

That "new audience" being Mac users who didn't need to connect to Exchange, which left out a huge number of potential Windows-to-Mac converts over the decade.

Intentionally crippled as a client for Exchange servers, Entourage was a sure way of keeping Macs from expanding their presence in businesses large enough to use Exchange and Outlook. (Wikipedia does a good job of explaining this history.

The incompatibilities diminished somewhat over the years.

Until 2003, Entourage could not connect to an Exchange server at all. Today, server-side rules are still not supported, nor is synchronization of tasks and notes. Entourage also relies upon its own user interface, which is quite unlike Outlook.

Critically, Entourage cannot import Outlook post office (.PST) files created on a Windows machine, making it impossible to easily move a user's messages from Windows to Macintosh.

Office 2011, being discussed this week at Macworld Expo in San Francisco, deals with these issues, finally giving Macs status as first-class participants in companies using Exchange e-mail.

If you'd like to learn more about Office 2011 - which looks quite nice and brings Mac users closer to the Windows Office experience - let me refer you to Dan Miller's story from Macworld and a podcast interview with Eric Wilfrid, the general manager of Microsoft's Mac Business Unit.

"Nowadays, compatibility means more than just file formats," Microsoft's Kurt Schmucker told Miller. "It's also workflow, collaboration, and user interface."

Nowadays? Compatibility always meant workflow, collaboration, user interface, and feature set - another area where Office 2011 is described as more like a Windows version.

After a decade of crippling the Mac as a business computer, Microsoft is now embracing it. Or at least has decided there are enough Windows and Office users who also use Macs to make improved compatibility something now in Microsoft's best interest.

OpenOffice.org Releases Version 3.2

OpenOffice 3.2 is now available for download, the organization announced Thursday.

The latest version of the productivity suite - which is intended to be an open-source alternative to Microsoft Office - boasts faster start-up times, ODF support, proprietary file support, support for postscript-based OpenType fonts, and more.

The release comes after OpenOffice.org hit a milestone of 300 million downloads over the course of its 10-year history, 100 million of which occurred from the organization's main Web site.

The suite includes basic components like word processor, spreadsheet, presentation, graphics, and formula and database capabilities. Version 3.2 boasts improvements to those components, including the Calc spreadsheet. The Chart module, meanwhile, received a "usability makeover" and includes new chart types.

"Some people are currently locked in to other personal productivity tools - maybe by corporate IT policy, or by tie-in to other legacy software. For everyone else, we want OpenOffice.org to be the 2010 office software of choice, and 3.2 takes us another step towards that goal," said Florian Effenberger, marketing project lead of OpenOffice.org.

Version 3.2 is available for download on the organization's Web site.

Microsoft Gives A Peek at Windows 8

Windows 8, the theoretical next version of Microsoft's ubiquitous OS, will be different from what has been expected of the platform, according to a cached version of a Microsoft blog post.

The Google-cached version of a January 31 blog on MSDN, entitled, "What's in store for the next Windows?" provided a limited glimpse of what to expect. The OS also was referred to as Windows.next.

InfoWorld columnist Randall C. Kennedy offered up predictions on Windows 8 last year.

"The minimum that folks can take for granted is that the next version will be something completely different from what folks usually expect of Windows - I am simply impressed with the process that Steven [Sinofsky, president of the Microsoft Windows and Windows Live Division] has set up to listen to

our customers needs and wants and get a team together than can make it happen," the post, from a member of the Windows update team, said.

"To actually bring together dozens and dozens of teams across Microsoft to come up with a vision for Windows.next is a process that is surreal! The themes that have been floated truly reflect what people have been looking for years and it will change the way people think about PCs and the way they use them.' It is the future of PCs," the blogger said.

Microsoft shipped Windows 7 in October.

A Microsoft executive at the Microsoft Global High-Tech Summit 2010 meeting in Santa Clara, Calif. on Thursday was unfamiliar with the blog. "I don't know what the blog entails, but I am certain we're continuously innovating [with] with Windows," said Drew Gude, director of US High Tech & Electronics at Microsoft.

Google Tweaks Buzz Social Hub After Privacy Woes

As it introduced a new social hub, Google quickly learned that people's most frequent e-mail contacts are not necessarily their best friends.

Rather, they could be business associates, or even lovers, and the groups don't necessarily mix well. It's one reason many people keep those worlds separate by using Facebook for friends and LinkedIn for professional contacts, or by keeping some people completely off either social circle despite frequent e-mails with them.

Google Inc. drew privacy complaints this week when it introduced Buzz and automatically created circles of friends based on users' most frequent contacts on Gmail. Just days later, Google responded by giving users more control over what others see about them.

Google introduced Buzz on Tuesday as part of its existing Gmail service. The service includes many of the features that have turned Facebook into the Web's top spot for fraternizing with friends and family. Like Facebook, Buzz lets Gmail users post updates about what they are doing or thinking. Gmail users can also track other people's updates and instantly comment on them for everyone else in the social circle to see.

But while Facebook requires both sides to confirm that they are friends before making that relationship public, Google automatically does so by analyzing how often they've communicated in the past. Those frequent contacts become part of the circle of people you follow and who follow you.

And before Google made the latest changes, who's in those circles could easily be exposed to others without the user even realizing it. Suddenly your boss could discover that you've been corresponding with a rival company that happens to have some job openings.

In response to the privacy concerns, Google said Thursday that it has tweaked Buzz so you can more easily hide your lists of followers and followees. It also made it easier for you to block specific people from following your Buzz updates, such as links, posts, photos and videos.

And it left the conversation open, saying in a blog post that it

welcomed further suggestions "to improve the Buzz experience with user transparency and control top of mind."

Privacy concerns intensify when Web sites get social because people want control over what information they share, and with whom. Or at least they say they do, according to surveys by the Pew Internet & American Life Project.

Their actions, however, can be contradictory.

"Our surveys have shown that people send mixed messages about privacy," said Lee Rainie, director of the project. "When asked directly, they place a high value on it. They express a strong desire for control over their personal information and how third parties use it."

But in their day-to-day activities, people are willing to go against their principles and share quite a lot in exchange for something they value. Companies navigating this environment, Rainie said, "are getting a series of messages from consumers that are sometimes hard to figure out."

The issue of privacy has played out, sometimes loudly, as Facebook evolved over six years from a closed network for college students to a social hub for 400 million people around the world.

In 2007, Facebook's since-discontinued tracking tool, Beacon, caught users off-guard by broadcasting information about their activities at other Web sites, including holiday gifts they just bought for those who could see the information. The company ultimately allowed users to turn Beacon off.

Other changes, too, have often met with user uproar. The latest concerns have been over changes made late last year to give users more granular control over what they share with others. But in doing so, Facebook's recommended settings also nudged users to be more open.

Canada's privacy commissioner is investigating.

Despite privacy uproars, Facebook has been able to amass a sea of users in part by responding to concerns, as varied as the concerns of 400 million people can be.

Google, too, was quick to respond, something that won praise from Lauren Weinstein, a privacy advocate who had complained about the automatic circles that Buzz was creating.

"The thing hasn't been out a week," Weinstein said Friday. "It's going to take some period to hash out."

Of course, those still dissatisfied can simply turn off Buzz. There's a small link to do so at the bottom of the Gmail page.

MySpace CEO Steps Down

News Corp has replaced the CEO of the social networking site MySpace less than a year after hiring him, and said a discussion of his priorities led both sides to agree to a parting.

Owen Van Natta, whose resignation is effective immediately, will be replaced by Mike Jones and Jason Hirschhorn as co-presidents, News Corp said on Wednesday.

Van Natta could not be reached immediately for comment.

News Corp acquired MySpace in 2005 for \$580 million. Since the acquisition, the Internet site has lost ground to rival Facebook, which now ranks as the world's No.1 social network with roughly 400 million active users.

News Corp chief Rupert Murdoch replaced MySpace co-founder Chris DeWolfe with Van Natta last year, betting that the former No. 2 executive at rival Facebook could freshen up the company.

But rekindling MySpace's popularity in the fast-changing Internet world has proven challenging. And analysts have expressed doubt that MySpace will be able to renew its \$300-million-a-year search advertising deal with Google Inc on similarly lucrative terms when the deal expires this year.

News Corp said in its quarterly earnings call last week that advertising and search revenue declined at MySpace and that it was taking longer than expected to achieve revenue goals at MySpace.

"Owen took on an incredible challenge in working to refocus and revitalize MySpace, and the business has shown very positive signs recently as a result of his dedicated work," said News Corp Digital Media CEO Jon Miller

"However, in talking to Owen about his priorities both personally and professionally going forward, we both agreed that it was best for him to step down at this time. I want to thank Owen for all of his efforts."

Jones and Hirschhorn both also joined MySpace in April 2009 with Van Natta.

Macworld Expo Goes On Without Apple's Blessing

What if they gave a Macworld expo and Apple didn't come? That's the central question surrounding the event that opened Thursday in San Francisco without the company that created its reason for existence. This is the first time in 25 years that Apple has not supported or participated in Macworld, and the company has indicated that it prefers to focus on its Apple stores and not be bound by Macworld schedules for product rollouts.

The expo runs through Saturday, while the conference began on Tuesday.

The expo's kickoff has often been a speech with new product introductions by Apple CEO and cofounder Steve Jobs, but this year New York Times technology columnist and book author David Pogue gave the keynote presentation.

His presentation was packed with technology jokes and skits. One skit was a takeoff on Frank Capra's classic movie, *It's a Wonderful Life*, in which the Jobs character wondered what would have transpired if he had

never cofounded Apple. Star Trek's LeVar Burton stepped into the Jobs role and witnessed a world where nearly all the computers ran DOS Version 22.0.

Ironically, of course, the expo was imagining what its world will be like without Jobs or Apple.

In this year's incarnation of that world, there are plenty of new products - many of them aimed at the iPhone and iPod - but few major announcements. According to news reports, there were only half as many exhibitors as last year. About 30,000 people were registered, which is comparable to last year's attendance but not as good as three times that number in some previous years.

New applications attracting attention include the Inrix Traffic Pro, which enables an iPhone owner to watch real-time traffic reports and have access to traffic cameras. A new service, called SachManya Yapper, allows users to create RSS-based iPhone applications without coding.

SkyVoyager, an app for the iPhone 3GS, gives a dynamic view of stars in the sky, with the view changing as you move your iPhone. The Microvision SHOWW Laser Pico Projector is a palm-sized projector for the iPhone, iPod touch, MacBook and PCs that displays on whiteboards or walls.

Mac-based products include the Ten One Design Inklet, which transforms the multi-touch trackpad on the MacBook into a miniature version of a Wacom tablet.

Interpret Vice President Michael Gartenberg said Macworld has "become a very different kind of event" without Apple as an anchor. This has led, he said, "to a lot of vendors pulling out, and raises questions" about the show's long-term viability.

Gartenberg said that, even without major product announcements or the presence of Apple, the show remains "a central focal point for the Mac faithful." Given that strong base, and the open-to-the-public admission policy, he said, the show is "like a very large user group."

As it turns out, he added, "Apple is only part of the Mac experience."

Keep Clear of Craigslist Scams

Given everything from the "Craigslist killer" to Connecticut attorney general Richard Blumenthal's campaign against the site to the escalating battle over prostitution ads, you'd have to live under a rock to miss Craigslist's sensational presence in the media. Lost in the discussions of illicit or criminal activity, though, are the everyday scams - and every category on the site has them.

From garden-variety pyramid schemes to complex money laundering ploys to pet frauds, the sheer diversity of ways to get stiffed on Craigslist is unmatched.

To be fair, the highly popular site offers very rational advice on how to recognize and avoid scams. But scammers persist in part because Craigslist is such a go-to place all over the world and partly because victims apparently don't heed the aforementioned advice.

One fellow even started a recreational blog called Exposing Scam Artists Who Use Craigslist, which is devoted to shining a light on the seedy underbelly of Craig Newmark's paradise.

Below we present a few of the scam classics. Make sure you don't become one of these poor schmucks.

Selling Something? Think Twice

When your significant other finally convinces (read: forces) you to get rid of that ejection-seat office chair you bought one drunken night on eBay, Craigslist is clearly the place to go. But one of the most common cons around is a dose of check fraud that might leave you reeling when you try to sell your unwanted item.

Here's how it works: The scammer contacts you and offers to buy your brown corduroy couch; oh, except they're out of town and will send you a check. When you "accidentally" receive a check for a much larger amount, they reasonably ask you to wire back the extra money--possibly even offering to pay a little extra for the inconvenience. But when the bank determines that the original check is a fake, guess who is responsible for the balance?

A variation of this scheme even briefly landed unsuspecting seller Matthew Shinnick in prison. When he tried to deposit just such a check (he thought he had sold two bikes to a buyer in Canada), the teller had a hunch that it was fraudulent and called the police. Shinnick wound up in an orange jumpsuit and had to pay thousands of dollars in legal fees before he could completely clear his name.

The lesson: Deal locally, never wire money to strangers, and stop buying ugly furniture.

Desperate for Work!

Employment scams on Craigslist are all kinds of questionable, but they also seem blatantly obvious. What is the likelihood that someone will pay you \$900 per week to telecommute as a "documentation professional" with no experience necessary?

Yet, the jobs section is well known for tricking otherwise intelligent people into unfortunate situations. Two of the most common ploys are to ask for up-front training fees and to solicit personal information (often via a legitimate-looking Website) for "direct deposit" or "background check" purposes.

In a truly off-the-wall case, one guy hoodwinked 79 professionals into working for weeks on a sham project. Promising a \$21,000 salary for two months worth of work, the charlatan set up a fake company, hired the group via e-mail, assigned seemingly real work, and tricked a lot of people into giving up their time and personal information. It seems the entire effort was undertaken in the hopes of getting a woman's attention.

The lesson: Posts that offer high income with little to no experience, telecommuting without meeting your boss, initial fees, and hiring without an interview are giant red flags that, in combination, should send you running.

Free Stuff (!?!)

Despite thousands of legitimate postings for free stuff on Craigslist, there have also been two recorded instances of crowds ransacking all of a person's worldly belongings. Why? Somebody posted an ad to the "Free" section claiming that the goods were there for the taking.

In 2007, the angry daughter of an evicted tenant carried out this particularly nasty revenge. An even more bizarre incident occurred a year later in rural Oregon. A woman unknown to the victim, Robert Salisbury, robbed him of a few saddles and then panicked. In a (profoundly stupid) attempt to cover her tracks, the thief posted a message declaring all possessions at Salisbury's address were up for grabs. Even his horse.

Anyone found in possession of stolen items is subject to criminal prosecution - as were the perpetrators of both hoaxes, who were caught and charged with a medley of crimes that included burglary, criminal impersonation, and malicious mischief.

The lesson: Just because it says so on Craigslist, it doesn't mean you can rob people. Be wary of catch-all posts that seem too good to be true. Also, don't piss anyone off who knows your address.

****Aw, Pets ****

Surely the furry and cuddly section of Craigslist is free of worldly evils? Guess again.

Last year, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued an official warning about a swindle that one site has informally dubbed the Cameroon Pet Scam, explaining, "Typically, the person offering the animal for adoption lives in another country and claims to be looking for a good home for the animal. Victims pay shipping fees up front but never receive the animal."

Another con involves supposedly "rescuing" dogs or cats, often from an animal shelter, and then selling them for a profit on the site. According to one account, a family put their dog up for a free adoption directly via Craigslist. The very next day, they got a call from a woman who had purchased the dog for a \$100 fee (also via the site) but then tracked down the original owners after noticing discrepancies on the veterinary papers.

The lesson: Craigslist is not the ASPCA. Make sure to get paperwork and documentation. Or just go to the ASPCA.

The crimes we've mentioned are hardly limited to Craigslist alone, but the epicenter of the world's online classified ads also has the following security ethos: "Simplicity and shame work best." According to Newmark, the most effective tools are warnings and flagging posts for removal. And scammers know it.

After witnessing a group of strangers trucking away his personal belongings, beleaguered homeowner Salisbury commented, "They honestly thought that because it appeared on the Internet it was true. It boggles the mind."

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